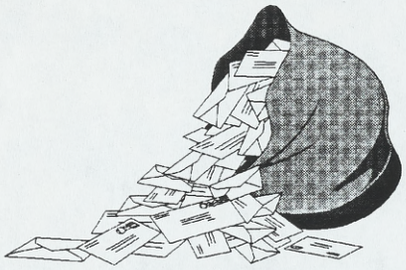
Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA



Lambda Letters Project

32557

Vol. 2, No. 4 April, 1994 6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608 Phone (916) 965-6851

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Issue

Domestic Partners Inclusion, Part II

Return This Letter Promptly!

This month's letter continues our theme of support for domestic partner protection begun last month by moving on to the domestic partnership benefits, companion bill to Domestic Partner Registration, introduced in the Senate by Senator Gary K. Hart. This bill would newly define domestic partners as family members, and grant equal health care coverage and rights as an annuitant for benefits from the Public Retirement System, for partners of public employees covered by this agency.

As before, the sponsoring party requested a carefully worded letter of support which uses tactics of inclusive "family" language and omits reference to gay, lesbian, or bisexual families. *If you are a member of PERS now, please write: "I am*

Continued on page 7

In This Issue:

Domestic Partnership Rights 1, 7
Comedy Auction Approaches 1, 3
Corporate Contributions Sought 2
Support for Majority "Minorities" 3
Health Care Reform Questions 3
AIDS and the '95 Budget 4
Congress Rejects Gay-Positive Programs .. 5, 7
Changes to Violence Against Women Act ... 6
National Survey of Gay "Greeks" 7

Comedy Auction Comes to the Capital City

Sunday, May 15th

Lambda Letters Will Help MCC Too

The Lambda Letters annual comedy auction will be held on Sunday, May 15th, from 3–5 p.m. at the Helen Weintraub Gallery (1723 J Street) in Sacramento. We have engaged two wonderful comedy auctioneers, Karla Carmony and Tom Amiano. They both have excellent reputations as comedians, and Tom Amiano has the added distinction of being the current president of the San Francisco Board of Education and a candidate for the city's Board of Supervisors. Karla did a wonderful job as auctioneer for us last year. The event should be great fun!

We urge you to attend and also to bring something to be auctioned that afternoon. Please fill out and return the enclosed flyer on page 8; it will help us prepare for the auction.

This year the auction will benefit both Lambda Letters and Sacramento's River City Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), which is recovering from the devastating fire at its Samaritan Center. Their loss has been estimated to be several hundred thousand dollars. MCC has been very good to us, allowing us to use their meeting hall without charge for our letter stuffing, providing us with volunteer stuffers, and gathering signatures on our letters. We owe it to them to help them in their time of need. Proceeds from the auction will be split 50-50 with MCC.

Lambda Letters needs a very successful auction. Our budget for 1994 assumes expendi-

Continued on page 3

Lambda Letters Project

Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and AIDS/HIV+ status advocacy and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and persons affected by or living with AIDS/HIV+ status into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

Board of Directors

John Boyle, San Diego, (619) 299-3438, Chair
Mary Ann Murphy, Eureka, (707) 444-2775, Vice-Chair
Gretchen Jung, Sacramento, (916) 922-6287, Recorder
Ray Leber, Sacramento, (916) 925-5368, Treasurer
Joe Heller, Sacramento, (916) 454-0411
J.P. Rasmussen, San Diego, (619) 543-0059
Karen Roth, Davis, (916) 753-6670

Staff

Boyce Hinman, Administrator, (916) 965-6851
Stefan Grünwedel, Newsletter Editor, (916) 455-5065
Sharlene Gilman, Legislative Analyst: Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Issues, (916) 757-1920
Joe Heller, Legislative Analyst: AIDS/HIV+ Status Issues, (916) 454-0411
Karen Roth, Legislative Analyst: Women's Issues, (916) 753-6670
Fred Dillon, Legislative Analyst: People of Color Issues, (916) 444-3350

Sponsors of Lambda Letters Project

Corporate Benefactors ($250–350)
Faces of Sacramento

Change of Address Form

Please change my address to:

_____
Name

_____
Address

_____
City, ZIP Code

_____
Phone

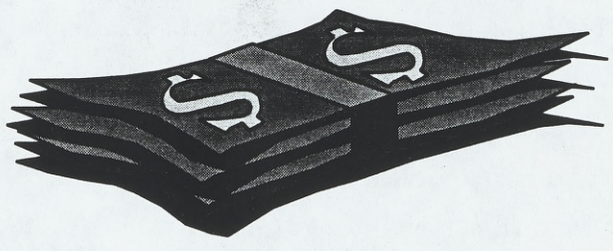
Send changes of address (incl. name, new address, city, ZIP code, and phone number) to Lambda Letters Project, 6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Financial Issue

Corporate Contributions Fund Drive Announced

Lambda Letters is looking for 10 corporations willing to donate $500 each in support of the project. With the assistance of the Workplace Initiative, a project of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, we have created a list of corporations with either domestic partner benefits or a history of contributing to lesbian, gay, and bisexual organizations or the fight against AIDS. We also have a list of corporations with lesbian, gay, and bisexual employee groups. We are now in the process of contacting many of those corporations and groups. So far, letters have been sent to Wells Fargo Bank, Levi Strauss, The Office Club, Kenneth Cole Shoes, and Working Assets Long Distance, to name just a few.

A major impediment to obtaining corporate contributions is the fact that, since we lobby on legislation, we cannot offer a tax deduction to contributors. We will need to contact many corporations before reaching our goal of 10 donors. Frankly, we could use help in composing letters and telephoning possible corporate donors. We also need people who work for progressive companies to approach their employers requesting a donation to the Lambda Letters. We can provide informational materials for use in persuading an employer to donate. If you would like to help, or if you have any useful information, please send us a note with this month's letters or call Boyce Hinman at (916) 965-6851.



People of Color Issue

Support for Majority "Minority" Districts Sought

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 set up a legal precedent for electoral districts to be created that consisted primarily of people of color. These districts are vital to giving people of color adequate representation on local, state, and national levels. They define community outside of merely geographical terms and instead try to group people that share similar life experiences. Without these districts, African Americans, Latinos, and other people of color are often unable to elect legislators effectively who best represent their needs and values.

This is an issue that has impacted the gay and lesbian community as well. When Harvey Milk became the first openly elected gay city supervisor in the 1970s it was largely because San Francisco had switched to district elections rather than city-wide elections. He was consequently able to run for the Castro-area seat, which was heavily populated by gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. It is great importance that specific communities, especially those that are denied their civil rights, have the opportunity to elect officials to represent their concerns.

Unfortunately, current conservative courts are increasingly threatening the legal precedence of these districts. A hotly contested Supreme Court decision in 1993, *Shaw v. Reno,* ruled one irregularly shaped, urban African American district in North Carolina as unconstitutional, even though this was the only urban district in the state.

This month's letter, addressed to Attorney General Janet Reno, asks for her support of majority "minority" districts. As the top official in the Department of Justice, we feel that she may have the best opportunity to have an impact on protecting other such districts. It is quite likely that in the near future, this will become an increasingly contested topic and it is important that we get the word out in support of these districts now.

Health Care Issue

Questions About Health Care Reform ?

The issue of health care reform and a national health plan continues to be on many people's minds, regardless of the state of their own health. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that Congress and President Clinton will resolve the issues concerning this soon. Although Lambda Letters would like to have you sign letters concerning health care reform, we do not know your views and which options and provisions for health care you favor the most.

Thus next month we plan to include a questionnaire soliciting your views on matters related to health care. We will be asking you about such issues as single payer plans, required employer-paid plans, co-payments, physician and hospital choice, payments for mental illness, payment for drug and alcohol abuse treatment, and payment for "experimental procedures." Think about these issues over the next month.

If there are specific items which you would like to see included in a health care issues questionnaire for our members, please let our HIV/AIDS Legislative Analyst, Joe Heller, know about them. You may call him at (916) 454-0411 or write him at:

P.O. Box 160522
Sacramento, CA 95816-0522

We'll be publishing the results of last month's questionnaire in the May newsletter.

Comedy Auction

Continued from p. 1

tures in excess of $28,000. Raising the money to cover this amount is a tall order! Given those expenses, we will need to collect over 38,000 letters in order to keep or cost per letter down to the same low cost as last year. Help us meet those goals—and have a great time—by joining us at our auction, contributing an item to be auctioned, or making a cash donation.

AIDS and the '95 Federal Budget

It is that time of year again: the annual battle between the President and Congress over the budget for the next fiscal year—in this case FY 1995, which begins October, 1994. While President Clinton has proposed some funding increases over FY 1994, AIDS activists believe that they are not enough to meet the rising needs of research, prevention, and care for persons with AIDS and their families. The number of HIV-infected persons is increasing, and the profile of the epidemic is changing. While fewer older gay males are being newly infected (itself not a reason for complacency concerning the epidemic in the gay community), more youth—regardless of their sexual behavior—women, minority group members, and older Americans are becoming infected with HIV and developing full-blown AIDS. Thus all HIV-related activities require additional funding from all possible sources.

Under the Clinton Administration the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has finally become somewhat free from right-wing influences and is now promoting more realistic safer sex campaigns, including the radio and TV condom use announcements that we wrote about in February. But the CDC needs more money; perhaps they should even buy some prime time slots to air these announcements instead of relying on the good graces of the stations for free air time—which is often in the off-hours. The Ryan White CARE Act funds numerous activities which are carried out at local levels. With increasing AIDS caseloads, communities need more funding to meet the need for these services.

Most distressing are the funding proposals which were put forth concerning programs which are administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Despite the fact that at least 10 new geographic areas may well qualify for grants from the AIDS Housing Opportunities Act (HOPWA), no funding increase was requested for these programs. (Areas are eligible for HOPWA funding when they have a certain minimum number of AIDS cases in them.)

Thus those areas which are now funded by HOPWA—and which will see increasing numbers of persons living with AIDS within them—would have to do with fewer funds than last year. Even worse, some housing programs which are funded under the McKinney Act, such as Shelter Plus Care and Supportive Housing, would actually be "defunded"—i.e., given no money in FY 1995. Even if it is funded, a proposed replacement for these programs, called "Homeless Assistance Grants," would not be in operation until FY 1996 at the earliest. So where are people to live in FY 1995?

This is probably only one of the letters concerning appropriations which we will be sending Congress in 1994. We hope you will sign it. Thank you for your continued support of the Lambda Letters Project.

LLP Volunteer Classifieds

People of Color Issues Letter Composer Needed—*This person will, on a monthly basis, contact agencies to identify upcoming pieces of legislation or other topics relevant to people of color. (We can provide a list of contacts.) Will also compose the letter which is sent to the membership and write a newsletter article providing background information on the subject of the letter. Will also attend monthly staff meeting in the Sacramento area on the third Sunday evening of each month. People of color are encouraged to apply.*

Signature Gatherers Needed—*People from anywhere in the state are needed to bring sample letters to groups they already attend each month and ask those in attendance to sign the letters. Lambda Letters supplies the letters and provides postage both ways.*

Letter Stuffers Needed—*Sacramento-area residents are needed to help stuff our monthly mailings on the first Thursday of each month from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Lambda Community Center at 1925 L Street (corner of L and 19th Streets).*

Persons interested in any of the above may send us their name, address, and phone number; or may call us at (916) 965-6851.

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Issue

Congress Votes Against Gay-Positive Education Programs

On March 24th, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6, a bill to provide federal funds for local public schools. It also passed an amendment to the bill offered by Representative Mel Hancock (R–Missouri), which prohibits any of that money going to school districts that have gay-positive programs or activities, such as Project 10 in Los Angeles. The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate. Hopefully, this hateful restriction will be removed by the Senate.

Well over half the Democrats in the House of Representatives voted in favor of the Hancock amendment, while all but 12 of the Republicans voted for it. Table 1 reports how members of the California delegation voted on the Hancock amendment. A Yes vote means they voted to withhold funding from districts with gay-positive programs, a No vote means they voted against the restriction, and a "–" means they didn't vote on the amendment. It is interesting to note that eight California Representatives, who earlier had signed pledges not to discriminate against lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in their own hiring

Continued on page 7

Table 1. House Vote on Hancock Amendment

Name	Party	Yea	Nay	Phone
Baker, Bill	R	x		510-932-8899
Becerra, Xavier	D		x	213-722-0405
Beilenson, Anthony	D		x	818-999-1990
Berman, Howard	D	–	–	818-891-0543
Brown, George	D	x		714-825-2472
Calvert, Ken	R	x		714-682-1992
Condit, Gary	D	x		209-527-1914
Cox, Chistopher	R	x		714-496-2244
Cunningham, Randy	R	x		619-737-8438
Dellums, Ronald	D		x	510-763-0370
Dixon, Julian	D		x	213-678-5424
Dooley, Calvin	D	x		209-733-8348
Doolittle, John	R	x		916-786-5560
Dornan, Robert	R	x		714-971-9292
Dreier, David	R	x		818-339-9078
Edwards, Don	D		x	408-247-1711
Eshoo, Anna	D		x	415-323-2984
Farr, Sam	D		x	408-649-3555
Fazio, Vic	D		x	916-666-5521
Filner, Bob	D		x	619-236-6688
Gallegly, Elton	R	–	–	805-522-4487
Hamburg, Dan	D		x	707-462-2515
Harman, Jane	D		x	310-348-8220
Herger, Wally	R	x		916-893-8363
Horn, Steve	R	x		310-985-8300
Huffington, Michael	R	x		805-682-6600
Hunter, Duncan	R	x		619-579-3001
Kim, Jay	R	x		909-396-6173
Lantos, Tom	D		x	415-342-0300
Lehman, Richard	D	x		209-487-5760
Lewis, Jerry	R		x	909-862-6030
Martinez, Mathew	D	x		213-722-9719
Matsui, Robert	D		x	916-551-2846
McCandless, Al	R	x		609-340-2900
McKeon, Howard	R	x		805-251-2257
Miller, George	D		x	510-602-1880
Mineta, Norman	D		x	408-984-6676
Moorhead, Carlos	R	x		818-247-8445
Packard, Ron	R	x		609-631-1364
Pelosi, Nancy	D		x	415-556-4862
Pombo, Richard	R	x		209-835-4247
Rohrabacher, Dana	R	x		714-847-2433
Roybal-Allard, Lucille	D		x	213-894-4870
Royce, Edward	R	x		714-992-8081
Schenk, Lynn	D		x	619-291-1430
Stark, Fortney	D		x	510-635-1092
Thomas, Bill	R	x		805-327-3611
Torres, Esteban	D		x	310-695-0702
Tucker, Walter	D	x		310-763-5850
Waters, Maxine	D		x	213-757-8900
Waxman, Henry	D		x	213-651-1040
Woolsey, Lynn	D		x	707-795-1462

Women's Issue

Modifications Sought for Violence Against Women Act

In January, both Houses of Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), H.R. 1133 and S. 11, which is designed to fight violent crimes targeted at women by authorizing funding for reforms to make streets and homes safer for women, ensure women's safety on college campuses, and train judges to be more sensitive to crimes against women. (As you can see from the sidebar at right, the facts about violence against women are frightening.)

The Senate and House versions are very different, however. For one thing, the Senate included the VAWA in the Omnibus Crime Bill, sponsored by Senator Joe Biden (D–Del.), which has not yet been passed. The Senate's version also does not address the problems facing immigrant women who are abused by their husbands. Immigrant spouses of U.S. citizens may petition for legal resident status on behalf of themselves or their children if they are victims of abuse. This prevents abusive spouses from controlling their legal status and threatening them with deportation if they report their abuse.

Although the House's version does address these concerns of immigrant women, it does not include civil rights protection for victims of bias crimes. These civil rights provisions would allow victims of felonies that are "motivated by gender" to bring civil suits against their assailants. Women who are assaulted simply because they are female would be able to file suit for damages.

Furthermore, the Senate version approves $1.8 billion over three years for improving the performance of police, prosecutors, and courts; increasing federal funding for domestic violence shelters; providing education for judges to make them more aware of the dynamics of domestic violence; creating a National Commission on Violent Crime Against Women; and funding rape prevention programs on college campuses. This funding is urgently needed and should be included in the final version of the House bill.

Please sign and return the enclosed letter to your Representative, urging him or her to work for the final passage of these vital provisions in the Violence Against Women Act, whether as part of the Crime Bill or as its own bill.

Violence Against Women

Number of women beaten each hour.
200
Number of women confronted by rapists each hour.
16
Number of women raped each hour.
10
Multiple by which U.S. rape rate is higher than
Germany's: 4
England's: 13
Japan's: 20

Percent of adult women sexually abused during their lives.
20
Percent of college-aged women.
15
Percent of teenaged women.
12

Statistics compiled by Senate Judiciary Committee, Sept. 1992.

Advertising Rates

Business-card sized ads (3.5" × 2") $10 per issue
Quarter-page ads $20 per issue
Half-page ads $30 per issue
Full-page ads $50 per issue

Send payment and your camera-ready copy, along with your name and phone number, to:
Lambda Letters Project
6212 Silverton Way
Carmichael, CA 95608
Deadline is the 25th of each month.

Gay "Greeks" Sought for National Survey

Douglas Case, a gay political activist in San Diego, is doing a confidential national survey of gays and lesbians who are in, or who have been in, traditional college social fraternities or sororities. Case is currently employed as the Coordinator of Fraternity and Sorority Life at San Diego State University. He believes the invisibility of lesbians and gays in the Greek system contributes to the homophobia found in fraternities and sororities. He hopes that the results of his survey, when published, will contribute to a reduction of this homophobia. Mr. Case hopes to find 300 people to complete his survey. If you would like to participate in this confidential survey, write to the following address:

Fraternity Research
P.O. Box 15863
San Diego, CA 92175

λ

Domestic Partners

Continued from page 1

a PERS member" at the bottom of your letter! Let them know that they should acknowledge you and your partner's health care and beneficiary needs.

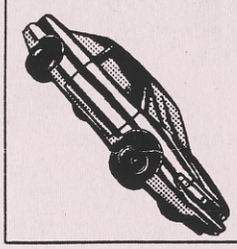
The bill will be discussed in committee on Monday, April 18th, so send your signed letters back to us right away! We'll keep you informed of the next phase of the push to include all our rights as families of choice.

Gay-Positive Education Programs

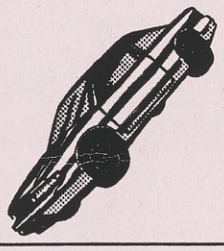
Continued from page 5

practices, voted for the Hancock amendment. They include six Democrats (Brown, Condit, Dooley, Lehman, Martinez, and Tucker) and two Republicans (Horn and Huffman). Apparently the commitment of these legislators to equality for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals is very thin or narrowly focused. We encourage you to call the legislator in your area and express your views on their vote on the Hancock amendment. They need to know we care how they vote!

PINK TRIANGLE TRAFFIC SCHOOL
If you have to go to traffic school
it might as well be
gay/lesbian!



415-541-8599



When peace of mind matters most (916) 564-8701

BEA BETZNER, M.F.C.C
Marriage Family Child Counselor
State License No. MFC 30303

Evening hours
Sliding fee structure

5120 Manzanita, Suite 100
Carmichael, CA 95608

Increase Energy - Reduce Stress

Acupressure or Massage
Licensed • Since 1976

Ron Punit Auerbacher (619) 295-6864

Relief of Stress & Tension
Improved Circulation

Robb Drury
Certified Reflexologist

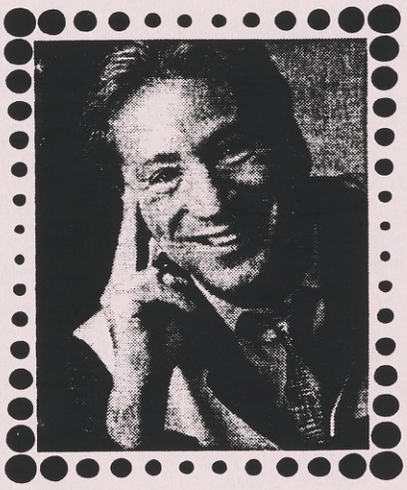
P.O. Box 163443
Sacramento, CA 95816

(916) 484-3722

Annual
Comedy Auction

To Benefit the
LAMBDA LETTERS PROJECT
and
Metropolitan Community Church (MCC)

Featuring



Tom Amiano

Sunday
May 15, 1994
From 3:00 to 5:00 P.M.
at the
Judith Weintraub Gallery
1723 J Street, Sacramento

Karla Carmony

- ❑ Yes, I will attend the Lambda Letters 1994 Auction on May 15th.
- ❑ Yes, I will bring an item to be auctioned off.
- ❑ No, I'm unable to attend the Auction, but I have an item to donate. Please telephone me at ( ) ____-_____ to arrange pickup.
- ❑ No, I am unable to attend the Auction , but I have enclosed $_____in support of the Project.
- ❑ Unfortunately, none of the above.